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UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000700

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JAPAN CLOSING ITS EMBASSY IN SURINAME

1. Japanese Embassy Charge Katsuhiko Hosaka called on DCM October 26 to convey that Japan was closing its Embassy in Paramaribo (and in neighboring Georgetown, Guyana) as part of a general exercise to consolidate and rationalize Japanese diplomatic representation worldwide. This ends a Japanese presence dating to Suriname's independence, and Hosaka said that the Government of Suriname had been "disappointed" to learn this news during the recent visit of his Ambassador, who is resident in Venezuela. (Note: GOS disappointment was perhaps more acute given its 2004 decision at Japanese behest to join the International Whaling Commission, in which Suriname has since taken steadily pro-whaling positions.)

2. Hosaka went on to describe Japanese interests in Suriname as minimal, as previous fishing joint ventures had passed to sole Surinamese ownership, and the number of Japanese citizens resident in Suriname had fallen to about 10 from a "high" of 50-60 several years ago. Japanese exports to Suriname are low, and Suriname's primary export to Japan, shrimp, has fallen off in recent years. Surinamese citizens do not require a visa to travel to Japan, profiting from the visa treatment accorded to Dutch citizens that conveyed to Surinamese without revision at independence.

3. As of January 1, 2006, Japan's Embassy in Port of Spain, Trinidad will assume coverage of both Suriname and Guyana, bringing the number of countries covered by that mission to ten, all CARICOM members. Transport connections led the Japanese to favor Port of Spain over Georgetown, the seat of CARICOM, for their regional mission. After the transfer of functional activities, Hosaka expects to remain in Suriname for a few more weeks to complete administrative arrangements related to the closeout. Japan's current non-resident ambassador in Caracas will retain responsibility for Suriname after the formal closure of the local mission, until the Japanese ambassador in Trinidad can present his credentials, probably before March, 2006. The Embassy in Caracas will then have bilateral responsibilities strictly for Venezuela.

BARNES

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